



Invasive Plant Species Assessment Working Group Meeting Notes - April 20, 2005

Attending: Ellen Jacquart (TNC, INPAWS), Lee Casebere (DNP), Tom Good (Div of Rec.), Rick Phillabaum (INDOT), Phil O'Connor (Div. of Forestry), Doug Keller (Div. of Fish and Wildlife), Mike Martin (DNR), Ken Collins (NRCS)

Report on Assessment: Ellen reviewed the assessment of privet that was conducted last week. It appears that so far only one species of privet, *Ligustrum obtusifolium*, is invasive in natural areas though there are reports of *L. vulgare* and *L. ovalifolium* moving out of cultivation. There are a few popular cultivars of privet, and lilacs are sometimes grafted onto privet stock (when the lilacs die, the privet then sprouts). The finding of the assessment group was that *L. obtusifolium* is invasive in natural areas and that it should not be bought, sold or planted in Indiana. It was also found that the other *Ligustrum* species have the potential to expand into Indiana and become invasive and so it was recommended they not be bought, sold or planted as well. In addition, the public needs to assure they are receiving lilacs that are not grafted onto privet stock. Since the nursery and landscape industry was not represented at this meeting, we will hold our findings for discussion and approval at the next IPSAWG meeting.

Next Species to Assess: The group chose to do sweet clover, *Melilotus* sp., next. We have several reports already, but Ellen will send out a note asking for more. She'll also set a meeting prior to the next IPSAWG meeting to do the assessment.

St. Louis Codes of Conduct: Valerie Vartanian, TNC's Horticulture/Nursery Liaison, has asked to come and speak to IPSAWG more about the St. Louis Codes of Conduct. Those attending thought this sounded like a good idea, but since industry wasn't at the table we set this idea aside for discussion at the next meeting.

New seed law – A new law was passed in Indiana this session to eliminate local control over seed; all authority resides at the state level. This same language was introduced and passed in about 14 states over the last several months, in large part over the issue of counties and local communities trying to stop the introduction of genetically-modified organisms.

Invasives Mapping/Inventory/Data Management: We discussed what organizations are currently mapping/inventorying invasives and how they are doing that.

IPSAWG - Of course, IPSAWG has been collecting information on invasive plant species occurrences in natural areas in Indiana for the last four years. We have a couple hundred reports and these are being entered into an Access database and linked to GIS. Ellen handed out the standard survey form used to collect the information.

Div. of Forestry – Phil reported that they are doing a resource wide survey (under the terms of the Habitat Conservation Plan for Indiana bat) and invasives are part of it. They are using random plots to note presence and absence and listing the three worst species at each survey point. They are also continually updating tract inventories on Div. of Forestry properties; their new protocol will include looking for invasive species. They will GPS invasions and estimate a percent cover. They are currently interviewing for a GIS coordinator for Div. of Forestry who will handle this data. There is also the Forest Inventory and Analysis data collection going on through USFS; they now include invasive species in their data collection. Plots are random throughout the state. Classified forest surveys are also done every 5 years and from now on foresters will note invasive species, area covered, and percent cover for 15-20 different invasive plant species.

INDOT – Rick noted that the Vegetation Management plan they are working on would include data on invasive species – however, they are just starting this effort and there is no funding.

Div. of Nature Preserves – They have no specific inventory; but this is something that they could start doing. They have a lot of experience in managing data for rare species through the Heritage database.

Div. of Ent & PP – Kudzu information has been collected from around the state. Areas are GPS'd and additional information taken; all this is going into GIS. Ken Cotes is coordinating this.

NRCS – Ken says that while NRCS is not currently mapping invasives, they would use maps showing invasions if they were available to help evaluate applications for invasive control money.

Forest Service – The Hoosier NF has a basic invasive species inventory done in the Wilderness and Special Areas. This information gets entered into the Terra database, a Forest Service database designed specifically for invasive plant species data.

Div. of Fish and Wildlife – They have no database yet, but they have developed standard procedures for surveying submersed aquatics. Contractors working on aquatic weed control are required to use this protocol and report infestations to DFW. They are currently developing surveys for floating aquatics; so far they haven't dealt with transition species (loosestrife, reed canary grass, etc.). Mike Martin notes that Sqlserver is the standard database in DNR.

IDNL – Efforts are underway to map invasives in the lakeshore; Paul Labus of TNC is collaborating on one such effort in Miller Woods.

Summary - Apparently all the invasive mapping/inventory efforts in Indiana are in the early stage of development. The good news is that means there aren't large data sets already in place that have used different standards and so are incompatible. It is important that all mapping/inventory efforts gather data that **are** compatible so we can combine our data sets into an Indiana-wide inventory. We need to assure we all meet a minimum standard in data collection. The North American Weed Management Association's standard was handed out (available at www.nawma.org) as one option. The NAWMA standard is what all federal agencies use and all states west of the Mississippi. It is probably the best standard to use for common fields on identification, location, size, %cover and so on. An example from Wisconsin was also passed out – they started with the NAWMA standard and then further refined it to meet state-wide needs. Mike pointed out one very nice addition on the WI form that should be incorporated. They include a field for how the location data was collected – GPS unit, hand mapping, aerial photo – to be able to assess accuracy of that information.

At some point, it may be valuable to have a separate meeting just for those who are working on mapping and inventory to further explore a common standard.

Updates from the Group:

Ellen – Wisconsin has started an early detection/rapid response effort and produced a several page pamphlet called 'Invasive Plants of the Future'. Copies were passed around and the group liked the idea – possibly produce something like this for IN?

Rick – INDOT has decided to eradicate autumn olive from along highways in Indiana. In part, this was prompted by threats of lawsuits from adjacent property owners because of pastureland being invaded. They have already cleared all of I-70 east of Indianapolis to the Ohio border, and are working on I-69. Rick noted that some landowners are upset that these plantings are being removed, citing wildlife concerns. Ellen will start work on the IPSAWG autumn olive fact sheet so INDOT will have information to give to concerned landowners.

Next meeting – to be set